

CREC Council Legislative Agenda

2015 Session of the Connecticut General Assembly

Priority: Predictability for School Districts

Good decision making at the district level, particularly during challenging financial times, is dependent on predictable resources and on manageable timelines and expectations for major reforms. Predictability allows school districts to focus on serving the best interests of students. The CREC Council supports:

- A formula for the special education excess cost grant that offers predictable reimbursement to school districts;
- Predictable expectations for school districts regarding the Minimum Budget Requirement (MBR);
- Voluntary programs that promote regional cost efficiencies and/or program enhancements;
- Allowing the payment of reimbursable special education expenses to pass directly to the school district, rather than going into the municipality's general fund; and
- Revised timelines for the implementation of new initiatives, including Educator Evaluation, Common Core State Standards, and Secondary School Reform.

Priority: Closing the Achievement Gap

Data show that children attending racially and economically integrated regional magnet schools and Hartford children attending suburban schools through the Hartford Region Open Choice Program are closing Connecticut's racial and socioeconomic achievement gaps. In order to continue this progress and advance a plan to reduce racial, social, and economic isolation statewide, the CREC Council supports:

- Providing sufficient funding to achieve the school integration benchmarks stipulated in the Sheff Settlement Agreement;
- Reducing the relative burden of funding magnet schools that falls on local school districts by increasing magnet school funding annually through a sustainable funding formula;
- No additional magnet schools that require tuition from sending school districts;
- Further investment in Open Choice as a more fiscally prudent and responsible way to invest Sheff funds;
- Increasing the per student tuition for districts enrolling more than 6% Open Choice students to \$9,000 and providing school infrastructure incentives; and
- Developing additional early childhood opportunities for children.

CREC's Vision:

Every student can and shall learn at high levels and, therefore, must have access to all educational resources within the region through the system of public schools served by CREC.

CREC's Mission:

To work with boards of education of the Capitol Region to improve the quality of public education for all learners.